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Protestant Dissenters;

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T O T H E

M I S R E P R E S E N T A T I O N S

O F

Dr. S H E R L O C K,

In his VINDICATION of the

Corporation and Test Acts.

By M O S E S L O W M A N. *2*

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible
and Crown in the Poultry, near Cheap-
side, 1718.

Price Six Pence.

2

*Cont. of Account
p. 14.*

A
DEFENCE

OF THE

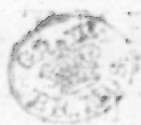
Protestant Dissenters

IN

ANSWER

TO THE

MISREPRESENTATIONS



DR. SHERBROOK

In the Vindication of the

Corporation and the Act

By Moses Lowman.

Printed by Jones & Co. at the
New York Office, No. 10, N. York
St. N. York.



A

DEFENCE, &c.



THE Controversy now on foot, between the *Bishop of Bangor*, and his several *Opponents*, has something so extraordinary in the management of it, that one would be tempted to think from the very manner in which it is carried on, that his Lordship has a Good Cause and Truth on his side, and that his Opposers are conscious to themselves of a Weak Cause, and which is ill founded at the bottom. His Lordship's writings are a pattern of the fair way of disputing, and of debating matters of Religion without heat and unseemly Reflections: He argues with that temper and gravity, with that freedom from passion and transport, which becomes a serious and weighty Argument: Unmoved by the most unjust

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and provoking Personal Reflections, he perseveres in the same good and Christian Temper : A very probable sign that he wants nothing to defend himself, but close and clear Reason, in the Use of which he is so great a Master.

But the Gentlemen, who have thought fit to oppose him, have apparently given into a quite contrary method. They began with invidious reflections and spiteful insinuations ; they broke in upon the Common Laws of Civility and good Breeding ; and omitted no scandal they could any ways get at, either from the spleen of Great Men, or the Tittle-tattle of Little Boys ; by some way, or other, to prejudice the World against the Bishop. As if the Arguments of his *Preservative* and *Sermon* were effectually prov'd to be false and dangerous, if they could persuade the World the Author had some faulty parts in his Character.

And tho' these scandals are as groundless, as they were malicious ; the Controversy is still kept up, on the same unjust and unreasonable foot. We have a fresh instance of this, by bringing the *Dissenters* into it ; who have really no more to do with it than the supposed *Jesuit* ; and seem both to be brought in to help out, in Calumny, what was wanting in Reason and Argument.

The

The *Master* of *Eaton* was pleased, with great vehemence, to call upon the *Dissenters*; to awake them, Poor Men, out of a Lethargy; and fire them with resentment against Mr. *Pillonniere* for treating disrespectfully Mr. *Calvin*; and to caution them against the Doctrine and Writings of a Man that could entertain such a person in his Family: It must be owned, it was to his purpose to suppose them asleep, when he was about to pass upon them such a weak and frivolous pretence of Danger, to their *own* honour, and that of *Calvin*.

But the *Master* of the *Temple*, who seems to have a much deeper and more artful Reach, has brought the *Dissenters* upon the stage, with a quite opposite view: To answer the *Bishop*, by exposing *Them* to Popular Odium. He was to reply as well as he could to what so nearly concern'd him in the *Bishop's Answer to the Report*: He is pleas'd to say, in the *Preface*, "That the
 " whole *Answer* to the Representation is
 " so made up of *Art, Disguise, Complaints*
 " and bitter *Insinuations* against the *Cler-*
 " *gy*, that whoever shall attempt to reply
 " to it step by step, will find himself in a
 " very *low*, and yet very *tedious* Employ-
 " ment." Therefore, with this *Art*, he excuses himself answering it step by step, and singles out just what he pleases to answer:

swer : And to make it yet more easie to himself, and more likely to pass upon those persons to whose Interests or passions He intended to address it, He takes upon him a Vindication of the *Corporation and Test Acts* : He well knew a little Art and Disguise, some Complaints and bitter Insinuations against the Dissenters, would answer that Intention well enough ; that many persons are inclined to be satisfied in that point with one short and plain Reflection,---*Beware of Presbyterians*. He knew he could, on that Subject, “ *Complain, pity,*
“ *lament,* and say the most tender things, and
“ such as will make *Women and Children*
“ cry. And tho’ he asks the Bishop, What
“ Advantage are such *Tears* IN a Contro-
“ versy about the *Powers* of the *Church* and
“ the *Christian* Magistrate ? And how de-
“ cently does his Lordship call out for *such*
“ Assistance ? ” Yet he knows they are of
Advantage to get decently OUT of a Con-
troversy, and has us’d it with success.

But mistake me not, Reader, (for I may still go on with his Words) he can do more than complain : His *Lamentations* often end in the *bitterest* Reflections ;

—— *Ha Nuga seria ducunt*
In mala——

He

He has greatly misrepresented the Intentions of the *Corporation* and *Test Acts*, which he takes upon himself to vindicate, in order to improve them as a Vindication of *other Acts* lately made : He has also laid a more heavy load of Calumny upon the *Dissenters* : And tho' it is a Comfort to them under such reproaches, that they have not deserved them ; yet they owe it to Themselves, and to their Country, to vindicate their Reputation ; and endeavour to appear better Christians, better Subjects, and better Neighbours, than it seems they are thought to be in the *Dean's* present opinion.

As to what strictly relates to the Controversy between the *Dean*, and the *Bishop*, it is in so able an hand ; so fully capable of doing Justice to Himself, and to the Truth ; that it would be useless to intermeddle in it. The World hopes, the multitude of the *Dean's* mistakes, which he would put upon his Readers either for the *Bishop's Sentiments* or for good *Answers* to them, will, according to his Lordship's promise, be clearly set to view in a little time.

I shall therefore only concern myself with the *Dean* so far as he has been pleas'd to concern himself with the *Dissenters* : Which indeed is altogether out of the Controversy, tho' he has artfully enough, as a
shelter

shelter for himself, endeavoured to introduce it. For what is it really to these Questions, Whether *Christ's Kingdom* be of *this* World, or *not* of this World? Whether Religion ought to be made a Civil Test? Whether the most sacred thing in the World ought to be debased into an Engine of State? I say, what is it to these Questions, whether the *Dissenters* fourscore years ago, were engaged in the Calamitous Troubles of those times, or no? Whether they are, or are not, still fond of their own Principles and Opinions? Whether they do, or do not, account the terms of Communion with the Church of *England* sinful? For let the English Dissenters be what they will; I may add, and let the Established Church be what it will, in Principles, Temper, or Behaviour; the Questions between the *Bishop* and *Dean* do no ways depend upon it: They are solely to be determin'd by the nature of True Religion in general, and the design of the Gospel Institution in particular: And not at all by what Men are, or are supposed to be; by what they have done, or may be supposed to do; For whatever Men may be, it alters not the Nature of Religion; and the Design of the Gospel remains, notwithstanding, the same; inasmuch as any Doctrine of the Gospel would still

still be Truth, tho' never so many persons should take upon them to vote it an Error; and tho' never so many Laws should be made to punish the Profession of it for Heresy.

But to come to the *Dean's* Charge: The first part I shall take notice of, is, accusing their Principles as the Occasion of much trouble to the Church and Nation, ever since the Establishment of the Church in *Queen Elizabeth's* Reign. “ *In Q. Mary's* “ *time (says the Dean *) the Church suf-* “ *fer'd not only in the ruin of the establish-* “ *ment, and in the members lost by persecution;* “ *but in those also who fled from home, and* “ *brought back those notions, which have given* “ *this Church and Nation so much trouble* “ *ever since.*” I suppose that many persons who fled from the persecutions of cruel Popery in *Q. Mary's* time, and had suffer'd in Exile for their steadiness and sincerity in the Protestant Cause; when they return'd in *Q. Elizabeth's* reign, came home with a knowledge of the Foreign Reformed Churches, and a zeal for the Protestant Religion: This made them desire a further Reformation than was thought fit to be made. But what trouble did they give to the Church and Nation? Was it the Example of Pious Lives, or the faithful

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Diligence they used to promote Christian Knowledge and the Doctrines of the Reformation? Hard it is upon the Memory of those *Confessors*, that they must be charg'd with Notions, that have ever since given much trouble to the Church and Nation. " But (says the *Dean* *) these
 " were one great occasion of the Disturbances
 " in Q. Elizabeth's reign: To what height
 " they were carry'd, and how they affected the
 " peace of those times, the Reader may see in
 " *Archbishop Whitgift's Life*, just publish'd
 " by our diligent and learned Historian, the
 " Reverend Mr. Strype." Here are no instances mention'd, of the trouble they gave either Church or State; but we are refer'd to the History of those times to find them out. And if we must needs go back to our History about an Hundred and fifty years ago, there is one thing I dare promise any, that will give themselves the trouble to examine it; that they shall find those persons, who the *Dean* complains gave the Church and State so much trouble, had themselves the greatest share of trouble of Any in the Nation. It would be endless to mention what they suffer'd in the severe execution of very penal Laws; and in a manner so Oppressive and Arbitrary, by the joint Power of Oaths *ex Officio*, the
 High

* Ibid.

High-Commission, and *Star-Chamber Courts*; that the Legislature, whatever incapacities it continues upon the present *Dissenters*, has thought fit to abrogate those hard methods of Inquisition and Prosecution, as altogether Unjust and Unreasonable. The truth is, Had some of those Notions, these *Confessors* brought home with them, been a little better consider'd and more regard- ed; instead of being so severely prosecuted, and imperiously condemned; it had, in all probability, not only contributed to their Peace and Ease, but to the general Tranquillity of the Church and Nation; and might have saved the *Dean* the trouble of all the remaining part of his History.

“ But (he goes on *) *under the Manage-*
 “ *ment of James I. the Dissaffection to the*
 “ *Established Church grew strong; and in the*
 “ *Days of his Unfortunate Son; a Prince, who*
 “ *deserv'd a better fate; it prevailed as well*
 “ *against the Crown as the Mitre.*” And
 was it then a Dissaffection to the Esta-
 blished Church, that rais'd the Jealousies,
 and fed the Discontents of those Times?
 Was it only Dissaffection to the Establish-
 ed Church that made Men apprehensive
 what might be the Consequence of a *Span-*
nish Match, Articles in favour of *Papists*,
 and the Education of *Princes of Great-Bri-*

tain under the Instructions of a *Popish* Mother? Was it only the Dissenters that found themselves aggrieved and uneasy at the Mismanagement of those Reigns? No; the *Dean*, how much soever he is willing to load the Dissenters, does not pretend to it. *It is very true* (he adds *) "that Religion was not the whole of that Unhappy Rupture between the King and his people; occasion there was for complaint with respect to Civil Rights; nor is it my intention to dissemble here what the Noble Historian of those times has so freely and impartially disclosed." But it seems after all, it was "† The pretences of Religion and Enthusiasm, that mixed themselves in the Quarrel, and put the Nation into such a fever, that nothing but the loss of Blood could recover them again to their cool senses." But what, I pray, has the Enthusiasm of those or any other times to do with the Dissenters? The Dissenters in general are as hearty Enemies to Enthusiasm, as the *Dean* himself; and it is notorious they were so to the Enthusiasm of those times in particular. And what little Reason he has to charge the *Dissenters*, as such, with the Oppressions and Calamities which the Nation suffered

suffered under, in that long Hour of Darkness, He may learn from the same Noble Historian, who acquainted him with the occasion there was to complain with respect to *Civil Rights*. For, as he observes, in truth, in the House of Peers there were only the Lords *Say* and *Brook*; and in the Commons House Mr. *Fiennes*, and Young Sir *Harry Vane*, and shortly after Mr. *Hambden*, who were Enemies to the whole Fabrick of the Church. As for the Rest, they were Church-men; and among these he names in particular in the House of Peers, the Earls of *Bedford*, *Essex*, and *Warwick*; and in the Commons House, Mr. *Pym*, and Mr. *Hollis*, all the *Northern Men*, and those *Lawyers*, who drove on most furiously with them; "all who, were pleased (as that Noble Historian acquaints us) with the Government itself of the Church*."

When things came to the greatest Extremity and Disorder, how many among the Dissenters did all they could; and even more than many of the most affectionate to the Church would venture to do, to prevent it? And afterwards heartily and fully came into the *Restoration*, and very much contributed to effect it. These are things, that, in Justice, ought to be remem-

* Clarendon, Vol. I. 233, 234.

remembred; and might have saved that Tragical Description the *Doctor* gives of those Calamities the Nation then suffered under.

The *Dean* tells his Readers, with what *reluctance* he enters upon this part of the *Argument*; tho at the same time he endeavours, to raise their passions, at the remembrance of those Disorders; and points them against the Dissenters, who, he would have his Readers believe, brought them all upon the Nation, *under the pretence of making way for the free Profession of the Gospel* †. If this is calling to mind, even in the tenderest manner, the miscarriages of those times ‡; it will be hard to imagine any Distinction between, the most tender, and the most injurious manner, of representing the Temper and Behaviour of the Dissenters to the World.

Having attempted to lead his Readers into this mistake, he goes on and would lead them into another, by it: * *Tbat the Corporation Act was expressly made for this purpose to guard the Church and Nation from falling into the same mischiefs again,* by depriving the Dissenters of all power.

“ It was plainly an intention, he says, † to
 “ keep Nonconformists of all sorts (whose prin-
 “ ciples and Affections to their own Ways
 “ cannot

“ cannot but lead them to use any power put
 “ into their Hands to the hurt of the Esta-
 “ blished Church from which they have separa-
 “ ted) out of Offices Civil and Military, and
 “ out of the Government and Direction of
 “ Corporations. ” His Misrepresentations
 of that and other Acts I shall hereafter
 endeavour to rectify ; but I must here
 appeal from the *Dean*, to Common Ju-
 stice and Equity ; — Whether the Non-
 conformists of all Sorts did so behave in
 the Disorders of those Calamitous Times,
 that it was necessary to keep them out
 of Offices Civil and Military, and out
 of the Government and Direction of
 Corporations, to guard us from falling
 into the same mischiefs again ? Whether
 they did not themselves as much feel
 those mischiefs ; as heartily lament them ;
 and as effectually concur in the Remedy
 of them, as the rest of their Neighbours ?
 And, whether their Behaviour now for
 many years, so steady to the true Inte-
 rests, and so useful to the Peace of the
 Nation and our present Happy Esta-
 blishment, gives any just ground of Fear
 they would use all power put into their
 hands, to bring upon us again, any of
 the same Oppressions and Calamities
 which the Nation then suffered under ?
 In this Case let Heaven and Earth Judge
 of

of the Equity of such Accusations as these the *Dean* has laid to their Charge.

He is pleased indeed Himself to take notice, * *Perhaps now the Case is alter'd* from what it was at the Close of the Troubles; and is further *willing to allow there are many among the Dissenters who are sincere in their Professions of Moderation*; but to take away presently all the benefit such a Concession might be of, He adds, *Alas! 'tis one thing to say, how we would use power if we had it, and Another to know how to use it, when we have it.* But it is to be hoped, They among the Dissenters, at least, who he is graciously pleased to allow are sincere in their Professions, would use Power when they have it just as They say they would use it. I shall therefore with the *Dean* let that pass. But He has much more behind to persuade his Readers, the Dissenters are Now as Dangerous as Ever; and are to be deprived of all Power, out of pure principle of Self-Defence in the Church of *England*, to preserve herself from their Persecution. If this be truly the Case it is a sad One indeed: But here we shall meet so many instances of Art, Disguise, and Misrepresentation, as would tempt one to suspect the *Doctor* did not believe so

fo himself; and may give some hope that no Man can easily receive it, who is not as forward to entertain unreasonable suspicions of the Dissenters, as the *Dean* seems to be to suggest and promote them.

“ Have any of the Dissenters (*he says*)
 “ declar’d that they were for maintain-
 “ ing the Church as by Law establiſh’d?
 “ No, certainly; the utmost that has
 “ been pleaded on their behalf, is, That
 “ their Principles amount to those of a
 “ general Toleration to all Peaceable
 “ Subjects: He should have added the
 Words immediately following, however
 he came to omit them; “ Universal Love
 “ and Charity for all Christians.” Now
 to take from the Credit of this Declara-
 tion, It stands only (we are told) upon
 the Authority of the Dissenters *Address* to
 the King. I wonder how the *Dean* could
 think to impose this on the World. Mr.
Peirce did well to vouch that *Address*, as
 it was a late, publick, and solemn De-
 claration of the Dissenters Sentiments:
 But does their Declaration of these Senti-
 ments stand only upon the Authority of
 that *Address*? Do not innumerable pas-
 sages in their Writings, and what is the
 fullest Authority, their Uniform Prac-
 tise, as well as what Mr. *Peirce* says in
 C that

that very place, give other proofs of it, besides that Address? Does not Mr. *Peirce* thus go on †, “ That the contrary Principles are a cruel and barbarous Encroachment upon the Rights and Liberties of Mankind; a bold and daring Invasion of the Prerogative of GOD? — That we have not the least hint in the *New Testament* of an Authority to compel, by any Temporal Penalties; — That it is contrary to our Lord’s Design, who therefore rebuk’d his Disciples when they discovered such a Spirit; — Nor did Christians, when they retained any Considerable Degree of their Original Purity, dream of the Lawfulness of spreading their Religion by any other force than that of Reason and Argument.” — Such Declarations did Mr. *Peirce* make of the Ground of the Dissenters Sentiments: And there are so many Evidences of their Concurrence with him therein, that if the Dissenters may have Credit enough to satisfy the World in any thing, they may of the Truth and Sincerity of that Declaration.

But who knows, after all, how far this will satisfy the Intention of the *Dean’s* Question

† Mr. *Peirce’s* Reasons, p. 33, 34.

Question, *Whether they have Declared for maintaining the Church as by Law established?* For who knows what the *Dean* means by it? It is material the Reader should observe, That the *Dean* seems to have several senses to it; and which he artfully diversifies in the several Parts of his *Vindication*, according to the Designs he has in view.

Shall we suppose, he means a full Approbation of all things in the Ecclesiastical Constitution? This he would have his Reader suppose expected by the *Test Act*, That Places of Power and Trust should be in the Hands of such only as were well affected to the Ecclesiastical Constitution: And upon this artful Turn, all he says on that Subject is founded: But in this sense the Question is extreamly Weak and Trifling: He might have ask'd as reasonably, Whether the Dissenters have declared, they are not Dissenters? If such a Declaration as that is necessary, to shew there is no Danger to the Peace of Church and State, from any Power they may be trusted with, the matter is brought to a very short Issue indeed? 'Tis only for the *Dean* to say, they are Dissenters still, and the Case is happily determined against them.

May it be suppos'd his Question should run thus: "Have they declar'd, They will
 " no more defend the Points in which
 " they differ from the Church, by fair
 " Reason and Argument?" That must not pass: For since there is no reason to fear any harm to the Church or State, in such a Defence of their Principles, it would be Unreasonable to expect such a Declaration from them. And the *Dean* Himself is willing to allow Them that Liberty; and acquaints them, They even now have it; but adds ---- *However we are bound to attend to Reason, we certainly have a Right to guard against Force* †.

His meaning should seem then to be, (for that only is any thing to the Purpose,) "Have the Dissenters declared they
 " are against using any Power or Force to
 " the Hurt or Damage of the Church as
 " by Law Established." In this Sense, that Declaration, and the many Others they have made to the same purpose, do fully come up to it. If this be the Utmost that has been pleaded in their Behalf, as the *Dean* says, it is as much as can be required, and as full a Declaration, as need to be made. Now this They have done,
 and

and even in many of those Passages the *Doctor* represents as insinuating the Contrary.

But says the *Dean* further, *The Dissenters are still fond of their own Principles and Opinions: And we have seen how far that Fondness transported them, when Power was in their hands. Why then, are we not to suppose, that they would use Power again, if put into their Hands, to set up what they account Pure Religion, and to expel, what They have treated as Popish and Superstitious †.*

What Fondness they have for their own Principles and Opinions has already been shewn is nothing to the Purpose, if hereby be meant, that they do indeed believe them, and would in a fair way of Reason and Argument justify their Profession of them: For this is no way dangerous to the Peace of the State, or even to the Peace of such as differ from Them; unless they are Persons so unreasonable that they cannot have Peace, if All Men are not forced blindly and implicitly to submit to their Decisions. But *we have seen how that fondness has transported them when Power was in their Hands.* Now when and where have we seen this? In the Civil Troubles no doubt the *Dean* would be

be understood: in which a fondness for the Dissenters Opinions had no more to do, nor so much neither, as a fondness for Civil Liberty and the Common Freedom of *Englishmen*, and *Protestants*, from the violent Strains of Power, which the *Dean* does not dissemble, and the *Noble Historian* of those times has so freely disclosed. Why then are we not to suppose *that they would use Power again if put into their Hands to set up what they account Pure Religion, and to expel what They have treated as Popish and Superstitious?* Why among other Reasons for this plainly, because they have no such Principles nor Opinions, nor any the least fondness for them; but do absolutely disown and disclaim them. They have often declared, and continue in the most solemn manner to declare, that even Pure Religion is not to be set up by Power and Force; nor any thing to be expell'd by Force, however Superstitious it may be accounted, or really is.

There was, it is true, in former times a *Solemn League and Covenant* enter'd into by many. At the *Restoration*, the *Doctor* observes, *there were some who left their Livings rather than depart from the Terms of that Engagement* ||. And their Sufferings for that

that cause have been magnified and extolled; and as He would have his Readers understand it, the present Dissenters *have* thereby consecrated *their Fore-fathers* Zeal to destroy the *Established* Church. Now it is certain, that many of the Ejected Ministers had never taken the *Covenant*; and more of them were against the Imposition of it *: In particular, Mr. *Baxter* prevented the Town of *Kedderminster* and most of the County of *Worcester* from taking it †. And tho' many scrupled the Form enjoined of renouncing it after they had taken it, in common with the *Nation* and King *Charles* himself; yet it was far from being the sole reason why they left their Livings, rather than depart from the Terms of that Engagement. They had many other Reasons to determine their Choice; and They then offer'd to abjure all Attempts to introduce any sort of Change in the Ecclesiastical Settlement, in an *illegal* way; in which the use of *Power* and *Force* we may well suppose is included. After all, 'tis very far from a Natural Consequence, that because the Present Dissenters have a good Opinion of the Integrity, Piety and Usefulness of them that left their Livings on account of

* Dr. *Calamy's* Abridg. Vol. I. p. 259. † *Ibid.* p. 104.

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* Dr. *Calamy's* Abridg. Vol. I. p. 259. † *Ibid.* p. 104.

of the Act of *Uniformity* ; that this must amount to an Approbation of the *Covenant*, or any of the terms of it, when it might be for many other reasons : Especially when it is notorious, They are very far from having any such Engagements among them. It seems a much more Natural Consequence, that They rather imitate those of their Forefathers, who were against imposing such Engagements, and those who did never take them themselves.

But now the *Dean* * advances to correct a mistake in *Dr. Snape*, and presumes *Mr. Pierce* has convinced him of his Error ; that he should give into a *prevailing Opinion among some Members of the Church of England*, that the Dissenters had worn off their rigid Zeal against it : Whereas *Mr. Peirce* has declared the great Body of the Dissenters judge the Terms of Communion to be sinfully imposed. This, the *Dean* argues, † *strikes not at One, or at many of our Terms of Communion, but at the whole Establishment ; the Foundation itself is Sin, and nothing good can be raised on it.*

From what *Mr. Peirce* has said, it follows indeed, that the Dissenters are in their judgment against Imposition, and do think Imposed Terms of Communion
Unlawful

* Page 40. † Page 41.

Unlawful, and what they are not to comply with : This is a rule for their Own Conduct, and accordingly, They do not comply with them ; but the same Rule must teach them, that They are not to *impose* their Opinions, no not this very Opinion, upon Others. How then can it hurt the Peace of any, who upon this Principle, must peaceably enjoy their own Opinion and Practice? Whatever the Dissenters may judge of the Church, they must judge at the same time, they have nothing to do to over-rule the Sentiments and Doctrines it teaches and professes. How does this strike at the Foundation itself of the Church? It is to be hoped the Church stands upon a much better Foundation, than the Imposition of Terms of Communion by Humane Authority ; Even upon the Laws and Institutions of *Jesus Christ*. 'Tis not always what Men add to these of their own Authority, that overturns the foundation itself: They may yet hold the more important Doctrines of *Christ*, when they mistake in some Questions about Rituals ; and may receive and use the Sacraments of Christianity in every thing Essential, at the same time they add to them more than is Essential, under the notion of greater Decency or more Efficacy. 'Tis very hard to lay

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such a Charge, as striking at the Foundations of the Church, on persons who profess Universal Love and Charity for all Christians ; and who have shewn, in many instances, their esteem for the Church of *England*, and among others, by a Personal acknowledgment of the Lawfulness of its Communion.

'Tis a yet harder Reflection on Mr. *Peirce*, and the *Dissenters*, as triumphing, (over the Church, the *Dean* would understand it) *rejoycing to see the foundations shaken, and the fabrick sinking*. A little fair Dealing on the *Dean's* part, would have prevented his Exclamation, *What hopes, what triumphs are these !* || For Mr. *Peirce* is not there speaking of the Church of *England* at all. He was speaking against Implicite Faith, and Fallible Authority ; the Slavery and Persecution these have brought into the World : 'Tis these foundations, this Fabrick, the true Foundations and Fabrick of *Popery*, he rejoices to see shaken, and hopes they may be sinking. And if the *Dean* can with a clear mind say (as he afterwards assures us †) He has ever pleaded against Persecution ; He might as frankly and consistently, as Mr. *Peirce*, have expressed the same hopes,
not-

notwithstanding his Dignity in the Church.

We have yet a more remarkable Instance of the Dean's fair Dealing in a following Passage. Mr. Peirce (he says *) *represents the Dissenters, as the Holy Remnant, who have not bowed the knee to Baal; so that the Church of England in this Comparison (and should seem therefore in this Gentleman's Opinion) is an Idolatress, and her Priests are the Priests of Baal.*

Sure the Dean hoped, none of his Readers would see more of Mr. Peirce's Book, than he thought fit to quote, in his *Vindication*. It is surprizing a Man, that had read it, could force such a meaning upon his words. He is speaking freely his judgment concerning some Passages of Mr. Pillonniere with respect to the Bishop of Meaux; and his Reprisals upon the Luther's, the Calvin's, the Gomar's, &c. among whom he had also placed our *Sectaries*: Now Mr. Peirce undertakes to inform Mr. Pillonniere, that if by *Sectaries* he means the Protestant Dissenters He widely mistakes them: And that for this reason, since they generally declare for Toleration; and it is for this reason only they are represented as not bowing the Knee, &c. There is no comparison between

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the Dissenters, and the Church of *England*; They are compared with No body; He only tells Mr. *Pillonniere*, He was a Stranger to them and to their Principles, if he thought them to be for Persecution. Nor does he make the *Dissenters*, only, that *Holy Remnant*; (to use the *Dean's* expression, for it is not Mr. *Peirce's*;) but immediately adds, * I think too " he is Unjust to " the *Protestants*, by representing them in " General, as Friends to Persecution." So that they only who have declared for *Persecution*, are supposed to bow the *Knee*, &c. And that equally among the Dissenters, where there are any such, as among any other Protestants of what Denomination soever.

'Tis besides, a violent strain of those Expressions to make them include a Charge of Idolatry, and accounting all for Priests of *Baal*, who might be charged even as for Persecution. Does not Mr. *Peirce* frankly declare, *Calvin* cannot be cleared in this respect, in the Case of *Servetus*? Should it seem therefore in his Opinion, the Dissenters-admired-*Calvin* was a Priest of *Baal* too? The *Dean* might easily have imagin'd a milder sense for Mr. *Peirce's* Expressions, where *Calvin* him-

* *Reasons*, p. 38.

himself was immediately concerned in them. If then the *Dean* will still have the Church of *England* concern'd in those words, He may be pleased to observe, it is however pretty safe from the Dissenters, when it has Mr. *Calvin* along with it.

There is one Misrepresentation more, deserves to be considered; because of the great use the *Dean* makes of it, to leave in his Readers a stinging resentment against the Dissenters and their Principles. Mr. *Peirce* says, *The Government, We, (the Dissenters) plead for, is no other than the Execution of the Laws of Christ: Here-upon the Dean argues, Since this is their Opinion, I'll venture to say for them, that it is likewise their Opinion — The Holiness of their Government, being the Execution of the Laws of Christ, must make them (whatever they now think) zealous to impose it on all* ||.

But with the *Dean's* good Leave I'll venture to say, That this Opinion will teach them no such thing; but oblige them directly to the Contrary. And Mr. *Peirce* had told him as much in that very place †. That they wanted not the Civil Magistrate; that they were not for calling him in to give virtue and force to their Argument;

ment ; that it would do very well of itself without any force to impose or support it ; and that for this very reason, that it is no other than an Execution of the Laws of Christ : As they had not, at first, their force from any Civil Power, but subsisted very well for some Hundreds of Years without it ; so in their Opinion they can never want it : For 'tis a Government, only, over such as are *willing* ; not over such as shall be *forced* to submit to it, by any Humane Imposition.

I hope it may now appear to all that are not immoveable in Party-Prejudice, that the Principles and Behaviour of the Dissenters are not what the *Dean* would represent them to be ; Not so dangerous to the Peace of Church and State. That they do not desire Civil Privileges to back their Arguments with Force and Power, and impose their Sentiments of Religion on the Church ; but that they are Friendly to the equal Liberty and Peace of Mankind : That they are not for imposing any thing on the Consciences of Others ; and only desire an Impartial Liberty of acting according to their Own.

But there's another Part of the *Dean's Vindication*, where we shall find many other instances of Misrepresentation, to possess his Readers with an Opinion,
 " That

“ That it has been all along one Wise and
 “ Uniform Intention in the Legislature,
 “ to guard the Ecclesiastical Constitution
 “ of the Realm against all Sorts of Non-
 conformists .”

That this was the Design of the *Corporation* and *Test* Acts; and that the Act of *Occasional Conformity* was only a guard to the *Test* : That therefore constant Communion with the Church of *England*, is the most proper Test of that Full Affection for the Ecclesiastical Establishment, which the *Doctor* would suppose the Legislature has all along requir'd, in all Persons whom it thinks fit to intrust with any places of Power.

I shall not call upon my Reader to mind, that if all this should be true, (as I hope he will hereafter see it is not) ; yet it will not fully evidence it to be altogether justifiable : The Burning of *Heretics* was not so ; tho' that Guard against *Heresy*, had a much longer Use and Continuance among us, than the Oldest of these Laws have had a being.

What I would aim at, is, to show that these Laws themselves have not, in their true intention, and in the design of the Legislature, put such an Evil Mark on the Protestant Dissenters ; and supposed their Principles and Tempers so Dangerous

rous to the Peace of Church and State, that they have judged it Unsafe to trust any Civil Power in their Hands.

To begin with the *Corporation Act*; The *Preamble* declares, “ To the end the
“ Succession in Corporations may be most
“ probably perpetuated in the Hands of
“ Persons well affected to his Majesty
“ and the Established Government. —
“ And further, for preservation of the
“ Publick Peace both in Church and
“ State.” The *Dean* would have this a Resolution of the *Legislature*, that places of Power and Trust should be in the Hands, only of such as were well affected to the *Ecclesiastical Constitution* † : Or, as he elsewhere expresses it, who gave a proof of their Adherence to the established Church ‡.

Now in order to see, whether this Sense of the *Dean's*, be the true meaning of those Expressions in the Act, *Preserving the Peace both in Church and State*; I must crave leave to examine more particularly the true Intent of them.

The Sessions of Parliament in which the *Corporation Act* was made, was open'd on the 8th of May, 1661; which was a Year before the present *Ecclesiastical Constitution* was settled by the new Act of *Uniformity*. All those Ministers that were after-

† Page 6.

‡ Ibid. 18.

afterwards Ejected, were yet in their Benefices ; and but six Days before, the Sentiments of the greatest Number of the *London* Clergy were sufficiently declared, in returning by a Majority, Mr. *Calamy* and Mr. *Baxter* for their Representatives in Convocation ||. Whatever then was the meaning of *Preserving Peace both in Church and State* ; It could not in any likelihood mean such an Adherence to the now Ecclesiastical Constitution, as the *Dean* contends for ; nor any such Affection, but what might be consistent with the Principles of Protestant Dissenters ; when it is notorious, that near two thousand of them were employ'd in the Service of the Church itself. The Leading Men of the *Presbyterians* had, besides, at that time, very Publick and Authentick Testimonials of their Affection to the Publick Peace of Church and State. Some were in Commission by *Letters Patents*, and were declared *Right Trusty* and *Well Beloved*, as well as the Bishops, and the Divines of the Church of *England* themselves †. The King gave this Testimony to them a few Months before ; “ When we were in “ *Holland*, we were attended by many

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“ Grave

|| Dr. *Calamy's* Abridg. Vol. I. p. 159.

† Instrument of the *Savoy* Commission, *Collier's* Ecclesiastical Hist. Vol. II. p. 877.

“ Grave and Learned Ministers from
 “ hence, who were look’d upon as the most
 “ able and principal Assertors of *Presby-*
 “ *terian* Opinions ; with whom we had
 “ as much Conference as the multitude of
 “ affairs, which were then upon us,
 “ would permit us to have ; and to our
 “ great Satisfaction and Comfort, found
 “ them Persons full of Zeal for the Peace
 “ of the Church and State †.” It seems, in
 the Language of the times, when the *Cor-*
poration Act was made, the most able and
 principal Assertors of the *Presbyterian* Op-
 nions, had a zeal for the Peace of Church
 and State ; and sure then, might be sup-
 posed to be for the preservation of it. We
 may also likely know, who were the per-
 sons then thought *not* to be for it, from
 the Lord *Chancellor*’s Speech at the open-
 ing of that Parliament, and which seems
 to point out the Design and Reason of
 making that Act : He told them, “ That
 “ a little after the Dissolution of the (last)
 “ Parliament ; while his Majesty accom-
 “ pany’d his Royal Mother to the Sea-
 “ side, the most Desperate and Prodigious
 “ Rebellion broke out in this City, that
 “ had been heard of in any Age ; And
 “ therefore it would become their Wis-
 “ doms

† K. Charles’s Declaration, in Hist. of Eng. Vol. III.

“ domsto provide New Remedies, for New
 “ Diseases, and to secure the precious Per-
 “ son of Our Dear Sovereign from the
 “ first approaches of Villany, and the
 “ Peace of the Kingdom from the first
 “ Overtures of Sedition *.” This must
 plainly mean *Venner* and the Enthusiasts,
 who on the 6th of *January* before, made an
 Insurrection in the City to proclaim King
Jesus. These were Men, indeed, Ene-
 mies to the publick peace of Church and
 State. But I hope, neither the *Dean*, nor
 any body else, will take their Madness,
 for the Principles of Protestant Dissen-
 ters.

The same Parliament seems to have gi-
 ven an account Themselves, in another
 Act, who the Persons were, they esteem-
 ed the Enemies of our Peace and Happi-
 ness †. “ To the end, that no Man here-
 “ after may be misled into Seditious or
 “ Unquiet Demeanour, out of Opinion,
 “ that the Parliament begun and held at
 “ *Westminster* upon the 3^d Day of *Novem-*
 “ *ber*, in the Year of Our Lord 1640, is
 “ yet in being; which is undoubtedly
 “ dissolved and determined,— Or, out
 “ of an Opinion, that there lies any Obli-
 E 2 “ gation

* Hist. Eng. Vol. III. p. 231.

† 13 Car. II. cap. 1. §. 2.

“ gation upon him from any Oath, Co-
 “ venant, or Engagement whatsoever,
 “ to endeavour a Change of Government
 “ either in Church or State ; or out of an
 “ Opinion, that Both Houses of Parlia-
 “ ment, or Either of them, have a Legi-
 “ flative Power without the King : All
 “ which Opinions, have been maintain’d,
 “ and are daily promoted by the Active
 “ Enemies of our Peace and Happiness ;
 “ Be it therefore Enacted, &c. ” And
 therefore the great Cautions in this very
Corporation Act, are two Renunciations ;
 The One of the Lawfulness of taking up
 Arms against the King, and the Other of
 any Obligation from the *Solemn League*
and Covenant *.

One would be apt to conclude from
 these concurrent Testimonies of the *King*,
 the *Chancellor*, the *Parliament* itself, and
 the known circumstances of that time ;
 that the *Dean* is out in his guess, when
 he supposes *Preservation of the Publick*
Peace both in Church and State, must mean
 an Affection for the Ecclesiastical Esta-
 blishment, and steady Adherence to it ;
 and that it Designed to exclude Noncon-
 formists of all Sorts, however peaceable in
 their Principles and Behaviour. The
 truth is, the Nation intended to guard
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(how fitly by such a Test I shall not enquire) against Men whose Principles and Behaviour threatned danger to the Publick Peace; but manifestly did not include with them, at that time, any peaceable Persons, tho' they had the same Scruples the Dissenters, now have, as to some things in the present Ecclesiastical Constitution.

It will not be necessary to say much to the *Test Act*. The *Dean* does not deny that it was designed for *Papists* in Particular: And therefore he might have seen, there was some Reason for complaining that it was extended to Protestant Dissenters. But says the *Dean*, * *It was well known that this Effect was foreseen at the time of making that Act, and have might been easily prevented, had the Legislature intended to prevent it.* This Reflection looks very unkind on the Dissenters. The Fears of Popery in those times were so very pressing; and the Power in the hands of the Duke of York, the Lord Clifford, and other Papists, so very formidable; that they were willing to get this Security against Popery, at any rate; and unwilling to clog that Bill with any thing that might endanger it. It was allowed by the Friends of the Church at that time, an Honour to the Protestant

Protestant Dissenters, that they so readily and generously gave up Privileges they then enjoy'd by Law, in a time of Common Danger, for the Common Security; and they were encouraged to hope, their Behaviour should be remembered at a more favourable Juncture. But the *Dean* observes further, It was continued upon them at the Revolution. It was so; and it is Certain, some Men in those times had very Treacherous Memories, or something else near upon as bad. And the *Dean* may be pleased to remember, there were then some Powerful Enemies to a Vacancy of the Throne, as there have been Others since to a Protestant Succession.

But the *Dean* seems very desirous to have it, this was King *William's* own Opinion, as appears by Mr. *Fagel's* Letter *. It is plain at that Juncture he had as strong, or yet stronger Reasons, for preserving the *Test Act* a Security against the Papists, as the Parliament had that Enacted it: But the *Dean* may please to remark, that Mr. *Fagel* in the Prince's name speaks all along only of preserving the Protestant Religion against the *Catholics*; and makes a wide Difference, between Them, and the Nonconformists.

And

And tho' he might judge, that Circumstance of time not so seasonable, to speak out his whole Opinion concerning them; Yet that Wise Prince, afterwards, declared both his Opinion of them, and his Desire, that the Dissenters might be capable of his Service, in a very publick manner. In a Speech to Both Houses of Parliament, March 16th. 1688. He says "*As I doubt not You'll sufficiently provide against Papists; so I hope You will leave room for the Admission of all Protestants that are willing and able to serve.*" If the Dean will so far give into King William's Sentiments as to approve that part of his Speech, he may have his desire, and the Honour to have Him of his Side. Otherwise he may assure himself, that Great Prince was so far from being for him, that his Opinion lies very fully against him.

We are now come to the *Occasional* Act, which we shall find misrepresented, as much, or more than the Former Acts. The Dean would have his Reader understand, that the Doctrine of Occasional Conformity broke in upon this Evidence; (the Evidence he supposes, the Former Acts required of Constant Adherence to the Ecclesiastical Constitution,) *just as the Doctrine of Equivocation and Mental*
Reserva-

Reservation, broke in upon the Evidence of an Oath *. This Reflection as hard and unjust as it is, was yet unhappily necessary to the *Dean's* Argument. Such Difficulties Men are often brought into, when they lay the foundation of their Arguments on a Mistake: And so it happens here; for there was no Evidence, which the former Acts required, broke in upon by the Doctrine of Occasional Conformity; nor any Sort of Equivocation or Mental Reservation in the Persons that practis'd it. Not to enter into any account of the Lawfulness or Consistency of the Principles and Practice of Occasional Conformists; (a Subject that is lately handled at Large;) I shall only desire my Reader to take that Representation that is given of it, in the *History of England*, (as is suppos'd) by the Hand of a Person eminent both for Learning and Dignity in the Church of *England*. He speaks of the Ministers that were Ejected by the Act of *Uniformity* and says, " They
 " were many of them Men of Piety and
 " Moderation, and did not pretend the
 " Church Communion was Unlawful as
 " to Lay Communion, tho' they thought
 " the Terms of Ministerial Conformity
 " too hard for them; and therefore after
 " the

“ the Exercise of their Ministry in some
 “ private Meetings, they usually came to
 “ to the Publick Offices in their Parish
 “ Church, and joyn’d with the Priest
 “ and Congregation, not only in Pray-
 “ ers, but in the Sacrament of the
 “ Lord’s Supper: So beginning the Ex-
 “ ample of Occasional Conformity, not for
 “ Interest, or with any Secular Intention,
 “ but to all appearance for Charity and
 “ Brotherly Love. † ” The *Dean* may here
 please to remark, there is no Equivocation,
 no Mental Reservation in an Occasional
 Conformist; as if He gave the act of
 Receiving for an Evidence of being in
 Communion with the Church of *England*,
 so as to be obliged thereby not to be of
 any Other. He must be a Man of un-
 common Sagacity, who can find any
 shadow of Evidence, that a Man owns
 the obligation of *Constant* Communion
 from an act of *Occasional* Conformity.
 Indeed One Act of Communion in the
 Church of *England* will serve to conclude
 a Man no *Jesuit*; because the pretended
 Catholick Church of *Rome* declares it a
 damnable act of Schism, and allows no
Christian Communion but in Her *own*
 Church. I hope the *Dean* does not in-
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tend to erect a pretended Catholick Church of *England*, and as uncharitable as this of *Rome*, to condemn all Communions but her own. *Men are not* (says the *Dean*) *suppos'd to be of One Church and communicate with Another*. What the *Dean* supposes therein I will not enquire ; but this is certain, the Occasional Conformist both supposes and declares, that his being of the One Church of *Christ* does not confine him to communicate with one *Part* of it only : But on the contrary, He is to own that *One Church* in *Every Sound Part* of it ; and professes it his Duty (as it is an Article of his *Creed*) to own the *Communion of Saints*. 'Tis plain, that the Occasional Conformist never gave his Act, for such an Evidence ; so that there could be no Equivocation, or Mental Reservation, in that Point, on his part. With the *Dean's* leave I must further add, the *Corporation* and *Test Acts* did not require such an Evidence ; nor were they founded on this Presumption : And for this I have an Unexceptionable Argument, even one of the *Dean's* own making ; *It is well known that this Effect* (of Persons qualifying themselves according to that Act by Occasional Conformity) *was foreseen at the time of making the Act, and might have easily been prevented, had the Legisla-*
ture

ture intended to prevent it †. Matters of Fact, are stubborn things; and the *Dean* will never be able, by any supposition whatever, to prove, that the practice of Occasional Conformity, was not then notoriously known in the Nation. And however he would have it pass as *no proof of what the Test Act* required †; it is very plain, that the Act passed against *Occasional Conformity*, was a new *Test*; and a farther incapacity of many Protestant Dissenters, than the *Test Act* either required or intended. In reality, even the *Test* required by the *Occasional Act*, is no such Evidence as the *Dean* intends, of an Inviolable Attachment to the Ecclesiastical Constitution: For undoubtedly, a Man may receive the Communion according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, and never worship God in any other way, than that prescrib'd by the Act of *Uniformity*; and yet think many things in the present Ecclesiastical Constitution, not only capable of Amendment, but deserving a Reformation.

Nor yet, I fear, are even these Laws a sufficient security to the Ecclesiastical Constitution, in the *Dean's* Opinion; so great his Apprehensions seem to be, of

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Danger to it from the Protestant Dissenters. We have a shrewd hint to this purpose : † *If it be reasonable to keep any Power out of the Dissenter's Hands, that Power certainly which gives them an influence in the Legislature ; in making Laws for Church and State ; ought especially to be kept from them. And it must upon the least reflection appear very strange to advance a Man to a share in making Laws for the Nation, and yet to deny him all other Power.* What Use may some Persons, extremely sensible of the Churches Danger, make of such an hint as this. In future times it may be thought but a proper Guard for the Corporation Act, (as the Occasional Act has been thought for the Test) to take from Nonconformists, of all Sorts, the Right of Choosing or being Chosen into Parliament ; that what gives them an influence in the Legislature may especially be kept from them. But I hope the Protestant part of the Nation is not quite so far lost to all Sense of their Common Danger, by their unhappy mutual Resentments, as not to bethink themselves they have a Common Concern ; and which requires their mutual Help to guard against the keen Revenge of their Common Enemy.

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As to the *Dean's* precedents of Foreign Countries, it may suffice to remark, That whatever the Case is in *Sweden*, *Denmark*, the *Principalities*, and *Free Towns* of the Empire, which profess the Protestant Religion; it may prove to be neither wise in itself, nor prudent for us, to imitate it. The violent heats between the *Lutherans* and the *Calvinists* have been matters of Complaint to the Wisest Men, and the most Affectionate to the Common Protestant Interest, of both Parties: And they well foresaw what advantage it would give to the encroaching Power of Popery: Tho' it must be own'd, there are some Persons abroad, as well as at home, unreasonably cautious for the preservation of their own Ecclesiastical Constitution; yet the *Dean* seems to be mistaken in many of his Instances. At *Dantzick*, as I am inform'd, tho' there are usually Three *Calvinists* out of Eighteen Magistrates, yet there is no Law to the contrary but that there might be Thirteen, or the whole Number. The same may be observed of the *Arminians* in *Holland*, who are not excluded the Magistracy by Law: As this fact has been so often both affirmed and denyed, it is a strong Prejudice there is no such Law, that it has never yet been found out; for the Publick Laws of Countries are things
easy

easy to be known, and such especially as concern the Qualifications of Magistracy in every Town: The Truth is, the *Arminians* in *Holland* have been a State Party against the Interest of the House of *Orange*, and the Power of *Stadtholder*; and have not had credit enough in that Government to obtain the Magistracy, tho' they are not excluded, as I can hear, by any Law. But the Protestant Dissenters have good reason to hope this is not their Case; especially at this time of Day, when there is not a Man among them an Enemy to the *King's* Person, or to the Title of his Government. The Dissenters are supposed by many to be no deep Reasoners: There is one thing they own they cannot penetrate into the true Reason of; -- Why some Men are so apprehensive of Danger from them: Whether it be for their supposed want of Loyalty, for about a Dozen Years before the *Restoration*; or their real and known Loyalty, for Thirty Years since the *Revolution*? Upon the whole (may I use the *Dean's* words?) *If there be reason in what I have offered, it will prevail with reasonable Men.* I can sincerely profess, in his following Words; *If there be not, I am not so unreasonable as to desire it should.* And further, shall be as ready to see my own Mistakes, where I am Mistaken, as to discover

discover the Mistakes of any other Person.

F I N I S.

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